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# A GUIDE TO KHAJURAHOO

BY  
B. L. DHAMA  
OF THE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

EDITED BY  
Rai Bahadur DAYA RAM SAHNI, M.A.  
Deputy Director General of Archaeology  
for Exploration.

BOMBAY  
TIMES OF INDIA PRESS  
1927



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PUBLISHED  
BY ORDER OF  
HIS HIGHNESS VISHVANATH SINGH SAHIB BAHADUR,  
MAHARAJA OF CHHATARPUR,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT  
TO KHAJURAHO  
OF  
THEIR EXCELLENCIES  
THE VICEROY AND LADY IRWIN  
JANUARY, 1928





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## INTRODUCTION

KHAJURAHO, the ancient capital of the Chandels in the State of SITUATION  
Chhatarpur, is situated at the junction of the roads which run from OF AND ROUTES  
Banda to Saugor and from Nowgong to Sutna. It is 34 miles to the TO KHAJURAHO.  
south of Mahoba, 27 miles to the east of Chhatarpur and 25 miles to the  
north of Panna; and is accessible both from Mahoba and Harpalpur  
Railway stations on the Jhansi-Manikpur branch of the G. I. P. Railway  
by good metalled roads *via* Chhatarpur. The distance from Harpalpur  
as well as from Mahoba to Chhatarpur is the same, *viz.*, 34 miles, while  
from Chhatarpur it is 27 miles. From the last-mentioned town the  
road to Khajuraho coincides with the Nowgong-Sutna road for over  
20 miles, after which there is a branch road from the Bamitha Police  
Station, which leads direct to Khajuraho. The distance between  
Bamitha and Khajuraho is only 7 miles.

Between Mahoba and Khajuraho there is an old direct route. But  
for its greater part this route is *kachcha* and the only kinds of conveyances  
available are bullock carts and ponies, so that the journey cannot be  
made in less than two marches. The Chhatarpur Darbar, however, are  
building a *pakka* road, more or less following the line of this old route,  
and when this road is completed, it will afford the shortest and most  
convenient way to Khajuraho from the Mahoba side.

At Khajuraho there is a small rest-house, permission to occupy  
which may be obtained from the Chhatarpur Darbar.

The origin of the Chandels, whose dynasty endured from the ninth HISTORY.  
to the thirteenth century A. D., is obscure, but they are said in inscriptions  
to have belonged to the Chandratreya line. The founder of the  
dynasty was reputed to have sprung from the great family of Sri  
Brahmandramuni or Brahma, the father and grandfather of Atri and  
Chandra respectively.

The Chandels trace back their original home to Maniyagarh, one of their eight traditional forts on the left bank of the Ken river, on a hill overlooking the town of Rajgarh in the Chhatarpur State. According to tradition they succeeded a Parthar or Pratihara kingdom which had its capital at Mau Sahaniya between Nowgong and Chhatarpur, and after the death of Harshavardhana, the paramount sovereign of Northern India, they gradually extended their rule over what is now the modern Bundelkhand. According to the inscriptions of Kirtivarman and Parmal Deva the ancient name of this tract was Jejabhukti or Jejakabhukti, which afterwards developed into the abbreviated form Jejahuti or, as it appears in the history of Abu Rihan, Jijhoti.

From an inscription incised on the pedestal of the colossal statue of Hanuman at Khajuraho dated in the year 316 of the Harsha era (equivalent to 922 A.D.) it has been inferred that the kingdom of Jejakabhukti was included in the empire of Harsha of Kanauj (606-648 A.D.). It is also probable that the Chandels were subordinate to the Pratihara rulers of Kanauj from the time of Bhoja in the middle of the ninth century A. D. until the end of the reign of Rahila (915 A.D.), the fifth of the Chandel dynasty.

Epigraphic records make reference to a long line of the Chandel kings, but the three who played the most important role in the history of Khajuraho were Harsha, Yasovarman and Dhanga, and it was during their reigns that the splendour of Khajuraho reached its zenith.

Harsha, the sixth of the dynasty, was an able ruler and it was during his time that the province of Jejakabhukti asserted its independence from the kingdom of Kanauj. He rescued Kshitipaladeva of Kanauj from the hands of Indra III of the Rashtrakuta family, who had invaded his territory.

Yasovarman, otherwise known as Lakshavarman, the seventh king, who came to the throne of Jejakabhukti about 930 A.D., was the son of Harshadeva. He was an aggressive monarch and caused the weight of his power to be felt by most of the northern kingdoms between

the Himalayas and the Narbada. He defeated the king of Chedi and conquered Kalanjar thus enlarging his kingdom and enhancing the rising power of his dynasty.

Yasovarman, whose reign, to judge by the number of his conquests, must have been a long one, was succeeded by his son Dhanga, whose dominions extended from the Jumna to the Narbada and from the frontier of Benares (Kasi) to the Betwa river. Dhanga was an ally of king Jaipal of the Punjab when he was defeated by Sabuktigin of Ghazni, and this defeat ultimately led to the downfall of the Chandels, but it was not until 1019 A.D., during the reign of Dhanga's son, Ganda, that Jejakabhukti was overrun by the famous Mahmud of Ghazni.

Dhanga himself lived to be more than a hundred. After his death the capital of Khajuraho was abandoned and the Chandel kings established themselves at Mahoba, Kalanjar and Ajaigarh, where they could offer a more effective resistance to the Muhammadan invaders.

The Chandels were staunch adherents of Hinduism, particularly RELIGION. of Saivism, and their tutelary deity was Maniya Devi, the Sakti or female energy of the god Siva, whose worship they established throughout the kingdom. They were not opposed, however, to other sects and showed tolerance alike to Vaishnavism and to Jainism which were equally prosperous at this time. Buddhism appears to have disappeared before the Chandels came into power. At present it is represented by a few remains only, most noteworthy of which is a colossal image of Buddha of the ninth century A.D., which was discovered near the Ghantai temple.

In beauty of outline and richness of carving the temples of ART AND Khajuraho are unsurpassed by any kindred group of monuments in ARCHITECTURE. India. Their sculptures are conventionalised but not without vigour, and are remarkable moreover for the great variety of subjects portrayed. An idea of the wealth of imagery to be found on these temples may be gleaned from the fact that there is hardly a single member of the Hindu pantheon that is not represented, and that on the temple of Kandariya Mahadeva alone there are no less than



872 figures. Like the better known but less beautiful temples of Bhuvanesvara, they are built in the Indo-Aryan style, so called because during the mediæval period it flourished throughout Aryavarta or Northern India.

Externally the temples at Khajuraho are so similar, one to another, that the particular faith to which they are consecrated cannot be determined without reference either to the cult images installed in them or to the subsidiary figures over their entrances, which in accordance with common usage depict one or other deity of the sect to which they belong. The majority of them consist, as usual, of a sanctum preceded by a narrow ante-chamber (*antarala*) and a transept or *mahamandapa*. Three or four of them, however, have one or two additional halls, *viz.*, an *ardhamandapa* or portico and a *mandapa* or nave, corresponding to the *nat* and *bhogamandapa* of the Orissan temples. Around the sanctum, moreover, there is an ambulatory passage (*pradakshina-patha*) which, like the *mahamandapa*, is lighted by large oriel windows. The roofs of the several parts of the temple are of the usual pyramidal type and rising as they do in a regular gradation from the low roof of the portico to the high spire above the sanctum, they produce an effect of graceful symmetry rarely met with in such edifices.

A few of the temples at Khajuraho are of the "Panchayatana" type, that is to say, that placed at the corners of the terrace on which the temple stands, there are four subsidiary shrines consecrated to the subordinate divinities thus making five shrines in all. Sometimes, another shrine also is erected in front of the portico to hold an image of the vehicle or *vahana* of the principal deity.

**MATERIALS.** All the temples, except the Chausath Jogini, which is built entirely of granite, and a few other smaller temples which are partly of sandstone and partly of granite, are built of a fine light-coloured sandstone imported from the quarries of Panna, on the east bank of the Ken river. The facing stones in most cases are embedded in lac (Hindi *lakh*) chunam concrete being generally used in the core. Iron clamps are also freely employed.

The temples at Khajuraho were already in a state of ruin 80 years ago, when Maharaja Pratap Singh, the grandfather of the present ruler, repaired them roughly in brick and lime. But for these timely repairs, one and all would probably have fallen by now. The first real effort towards their more thorough preservation was made in 1904 when a systematic scheme of repair was drawn up by Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archæology, with the help of Mr. H. Cousens, Superintendent in the Western Circle. The measures then decided upon were subsequently carried out under the supervision of Mr. F. Manley, an Engineer of the Panna State, the operations lasting from 1904 to 1910, and involving an expenditure of some Rs. 92,000. One particularly valuable result of these measures was the removal of the ugly and inappropriate modern porches which for years had disfigured the temples of Devi Jagadambi and Chitragupta. Ten years later a further programme of repair, drawn up by Mr. J. A. Page of the Archæological Department, was taken in hand and completed between the years 1920 and 1923, the new work being carried out under the supervision of the writer at a cost of Rs. 42,000, half of which was contributed, as before, by the Government of India. Besides minor works at a number of the temples this programme provided for extensive repairs to the important temples of Duladeo and Chaturbhuja. Finally, a few supplementary measures, which proved necessary at some of the monuments, particularly at the temple of Chausath Jogini, were added to this second programme and completed at a cost of Rs. 6,000.

## THE CITY OF KHAJURAHO.

That Khajuraho was once a large city is attested by the extent of its ruins which cover an area of about eight square miles. Its old name, as given in the inscriptions, was *Sri Kharjuravahaka*. The bard Chand in his *Prithiviraja Rasisa* calls it *Khajurapura* or *Khajjinpura*. Tradition ascribes the origin of the name to two golden Khajur trees (date palms), with which one of the city gates was ornamented, but it was more probably due to the abundance of palm trees in the neighbourhood.

The earliest mention of the place is by Abu Rihan, who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni in his campaign against Kalanjar in 1022 A.D., and speaks of it as the capital of Jijhoti. The next mention is by Ibn Batuta, who visited it about 1335 A.D., during Muhammad Shah Tughlaq's reign and calls it "Kajura," adding that "there is a lake about a mile in length and round this lake are temples in which are idols. At this place resides a tribe of *Jogis* with long and matted hair. Their colour inclines to yellow, which arises from their fasting. Many of the Moslems of these parts attend on them and learn magic from them."

The earliest mention of the province of Jejahuti, which corresponded with the modern district of Bundelkhand, is by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Thsang, who was travelling in India between 629 and 645 A.D. He does not mention any chief town but calls the country Chih-chi-to. He refers to the fertility of the country and says that the bulk of the people were not Buddhists; that though there were many dozens of monasteries there were but a few brethren, while there were twelve temples with a thousand Brahmans attached to them. The king himself was a Brahman but a firm believer in Buddhism.

The opinion is expressed by Mr. Vincent Smith that Eran near Saugor, and not Khajuraho, may have been the capital of Jejakabhukti

during Hiuen Thsang's time as the distances and bearings given by him do not accord with the location of the capital at Khajuraho. But whether Khajuraho was the capital or not of the kingdom of Jejakabhukti during Hiuen Thsang's time, it was certainly the capital in the time of Abu Rihan and Ibn Batuta. At present it is only a small village, situated at the south-east corner of the Khajuraho Sagar or Ninora Tal, which is now half a mile in length by a quarter of a mile in breadth and is probably the lake referred to by Ibn Batuta.

In early days there used to be held at Khajuraho a great religious fair on the Sivaratri festival, which was attended by thousands of pilgrims from far and near. The fair continues to take place every year but though the temples also retain their religious sanctity, the gathering of pilgrims is never a very large one.

About the village and its lake there are some twenty temples, the sole survivors of the eighty-five temples said to have once existed here. This tradition there is no reason to discredit, since it is amply supported by the existence of numerous ruins as well as the temples referred to. No doubt many of the buildings fell a natural prey to time and neglect; others may have been destroyed by Sikandar Lodi during his retreat from Panna and Baghelkhand in 1494-5 A.D.

The surviving temples may be divided into three groups, namely, the western, eastern and southern. It is the western group which the visitor to Khajuraho first encounters, and it is this group, therefore, which will first be described. As all the temples are in one style, and all belong to the 10th or 11th century A.D., it will suffice to describe in detail the principal ones only among them. For the rest, only such particulars will be added as are necessary to their proper understanding.

## WESTERN GROUP OF TEMPLES.

The western group of temples is situated on the west of the Bamitha-Rajnagar road and comprises seven imposing edifices arranged in two rows and dedicated to the Saivite and Vaishnavite cults.

### CHAUSATH JOGINI TEMPLE.

This temple stands on a low rocky eminence to the south-east of the Sibsagar lake. As stated above, it is the only temple at Khajuraho which is built entirely of granite and also the only one at that place which is oriented north-east and south-west instead of due north and south. It is a hypæthral building which stands upon a massively constructed platform and comprises an oblong courtyard 104 feet long by 60 wide, surrounded by sixty-five cells, of which only 35 have survived. The cell in the middle of the south-west wall, which faces the missing entrance in the middle of the north-east wall, is larger than the other cells and at the side of it is a narrow opening giving access to the passage which encircles the temple. The cells are roofed with small spires or *sikharas*, the lower part of which is adorned with triangular ornaments in imitation of *charitya* windows. The entrances of the cells were once furnished with double doors of wood as evidenced by the mortice holes in the granite lintels. Excluding the larger cell, the cells around the courtyard number 64, corresponding to the number of the Yoginis, the female goblins or attendants of the blood-drinking goddess Kali, after whom the temple is named. No images are now left in any of the sixty-four smaller cells. But that the temple was originally dedicated to the Yoginis is evident from three images lying in the larger cell referred to. One of them represents the goddess Mahisha-mardini, killing the buffalo demon (Mahisha). The other two images, which appear to have been brought from two of the smaller cells, are of the Yoginis Mahesvari and the three-headed Brahmani. On the pedestal of the former the name Mahesvari is inscribed. The remaining 61 images must have been removed by the villagers. General

Cunningham was of opinion that there was a temple in the centre of the courtyard consecrated to Kali herself or to Siva. This, however, seems extremely unlikely, as recent excavations in the courtyard did not reveal any trace of a structure on the spot. There is no dated inscription to show the precise age of the temple, but there is no doubt that it is the earliest of the temples that have survived at Khajuraho. To judge from the style of the three images and the character of the two short epigraphs referred to, it cannot be assigned to a later date than 900 A.D.

Less than half a mile due west of the Chausath Jogini there is a small temple dedicated to Mahadeva and situated on the embankment of the lake called Lalguan Sagar. The temple is built partly of granite and partly of sandstone and probably belongs to the 10th century A.D. It consists of a sanctum and a portico, the latter of which is missing.

This temple is situated to the north of the Chausath Jogini temple and is the largest of all the Khajuraho temples now existing (Plate V). Originally it was a temple of the Panchayatana type, but the four subordinate temples which occupied the corners of the platform have perished, together with the stone benches between them. For the rest, the temple is in perfect preservation with the four chambers preceding the sanctum intact, as well as an ambulatory passage around it. In length it measures 102 feet 3 inches excluding the steps in front of the portico ; in width 66'-10" ; and in height 101'-9". The platform differs from those of the other temples at Khajuraho in that it has projections on the north, south and west sides corresponding to the advanced oriel windows of the temple. Observe, at the entrance to this temple, the graceful *torana* or triumphal arch decorated with figures of deities, musicians, horned gorgons and the like. And observe, too, in the portico (*ardhamandapa*) and the nave (*mandapa*) the richly carved and coffered ceilings. The ceiling of the four pillared hall (*mahamandapa*) is of a different style, being composed of concentric overlapping circles. The entrance to the sanctum is enriched with floral carvings interspersed with figures of ascetics engaged in

penance. The mutilated female figures at the bases of the jambs are the river goddesses Ganges (Ganga) and Jumna (Yamuna) accompanied by their respective vehicles, the crocodile and the tortoise. Inside the sanctum, which is a plain square chamber, stands a marble *linga*, the symbol of Siva, the third member of the Hindu triad. *Linga* or phallic worship has been practised in India, as in other parts of the world, from time immemorial, but when it came to be identified with Siva is not known. The earliest Siva *linga* known dates from about the second century A.D.

The outside wall of the sanctum within the ambulatory passage has an elaborately moulded plinth decorated with two continuous rows of figures. The eight figures in the lower row—namely, two at each of the four corners—portray the eight regents or presiding deities of the cardinal points (Dikpalas). Starting in the east and moving clock-wise, they are in succession :—Indra (the god of the aerial region), Agni (Fire), Yama (Death), Nairrita, Varuna, the god of the ocean, Vayu, the god of wind, Kubera, the god of riches, and Isana. The pillared niches in the middle of the walls are reserved for statues of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva under their various forms or incarnations.

The plinth of the temple on the outside rises in a succession of bold, deep mouldings similar to those around the sanctum. The nine niches at the central points contain figures of Siva and his son Ganesa, the god of Luck and the seven Mother Goddesses (*sapta-matarah*), the female counterparts (*Sakti*) of the principal Hindu deities. Above the plinth on the walls of the temple, are three broad belts of figures running round the sanctum and the transept. These figures represent the principal Hindu gods and goddesses, the Dikpalas, and male and female serpent deities. There are also numerous reliefs of *apsaras* or nymphs in all sorts of indelicate postures, as if to tempt the ascetics seated by them. Above these, again, are several tiers of mouldings which in their turn are succeeded by further bands of sculptures and miniature spires (*sikhara*) repeated again and again up to the summit of the spire. This latter is

surmounted by a ribbed circular ornament carved in imitation of the citron fruit (*amalaka*) from which it takes its name, and above it is another and smaller *amalaka* crowned by a vase-shaped pinnacle (*amritaghata* or vessel of nectar). Crowning the corner ribs of the great spire there once stood free standing statues, none of which have survived. The larger *amalaka* is pierced with vertical holes for the reception of flags. There are several masons' marks on the temple, including the word *dasan* meaning 'architrave', which is cut on the soffit of one of the architraves of the ambulatory passage. The temple dates from the 10th century A.D.

To the immediate north of the Kandariya temple is a ruined temple <sup>MAHADEVA</sup> of Mahadeva or Siva, whose figure is carved on the middle of the lintel <sup>TEMPLE.</sup> above the entrance door to the sanctum. The sanctum itself has perished, but the portico on the east side is intact.

This temple is situated further north, beyond the Mahadeva temple. <sup>DEVI JAGADAMBI</sup> It faces east and is planned like the Kandariya temple, save that the <sup>TEMPLE.</sup> *pradakshina* passage around the sanctum and the *mandapa* are lacking. The temple was dedicated to Vishnu, whose image may be seen over the entrance to the sanctum. Inside the sanctum is an elaborate framework of stone, which originally contained an image of Vishnu. The latter has gone and an unfinished but ancient image of his consort, the goddess Lakshmi, has been substituted in its place. In ignorance of its real character, however, this image has been painted black and is now worshipped as Kali or Devi Jagadambi (the mother goddess of the world) after whom the temple is now called.

The temple is 73'-3" long, excluding the steps, and 42'-1" wide externally. The corners of the platform appear to have been occupied by subsidiary shrines, but all of them have perished. The external decorations closely resemble those of the Kandariya temple and are equally sumptuous. Of the Dikpala figures, that of Yama on the south side of the sanctum is remarkable for its expression; and the figure of Siva, eight-handed and three-headed, in the lower niche on the west facade is worthy of notice.



**CHITRAGUPTA OR  
BHARATJI'S  
TEMPLE.**

The Chitragupta temple is situated at a short distance to the north of the temple described above and like most of the temples at Khajuraho faces east. Its plan is similar to that of the Devi Jagadambi temple, except that the square ceiling of the hall is reduced by the cutting off of its corners to an octagon, which in its turn is converted into a series of diminishing circles. The outside length, excluding the steps, and the breadth of the temple are respectively 74'-9" and 51'-9". The temple is dedicated to Surya or the Sun-god and an image of this deity, 5 feet in height, wearing high boots and driving in a chariot of seven horses, is enshrined in the sanctum; and another image of the god occurs, in the usual position, over the entrance.

Of the carvings on the outside a narrow recessed frieze in the plinth represents a party of stone carriers as well as elephant fights, processions, hunting scenes and dances. Another sculpture of interest is an eleven-headed image of Vishnu enshrined in the central niche to the south of the sanctum. The central head is of Vishnu himself, while the remaining ten heads are symbolic of his ten incarnations. There are no inscriptions on the temple except some masons' marks.

**CHOPRA OR  
SQUARE TANK.**

Chopra is the name of a small square tank with flights of steps on its four sides, situated about two hundred yards to the north-west of the Chitragupta Temple. In the centre of the tank is a small pavilion supported on pillars which appears originally to have had four storeys. The two lower ones have alone survived and in a ruined condition. The structure was presumably a temple, but there is nothing now left to determine its dedication.

**VISVANATHA  
TEMPLE.**

These two temples are the most northerly buildings of the east row of temples in the western group (Plate VIII). They stand facing each other on a common terrace which is ascended by two flights of steps on the north and south sides. The southern stair is flanked by a pair of elephant statues. The other stair was also once adorned with a statue of a lion on either side. Happily, both of these statues have lately been recovered from the debris at the foot of the steps.

The larger temple is dedicated to Visvanatha or Siva, the 'Lord of the Universe,' whose image seated on his bull Nandi occupies the middle of the lintel above the entrance to the sanctum, with Brahma and Vishnu to his right and left. Its plan closely follows that of the Kandariya temple with its five chambers and an open passage around the sanctum, but it is a little smaller in size, being 89'-1" in length and 45'-10" in breadth. Like the Kandariya temple, too, it had four smaller shrines at the corners of the terrace. Two of these have disappeared, but the other two, as well as the larger shrine occupied by Siva's vehicle Nandi, have survived in good condition. The interior decorations, with the exception of those on the entrance to the sanctum and the coffered ceilings are as rich as on the other temples. On the outside, too, there are the usual bands of sculptures, mouldings, etc. The reliefs in the central panels between the oriel windows are grossly obscene. Other larger groups, however, represent Siva and his consort Parvati, and there are a few images of Brahma and Vishnu.

Inside the *mandapa* are two Sanskrit inscriptions engraved on stone slabs. The larger inscription to the proper left is dated in Vikrama Samvat 1059 or A.D. 1002, and belongs to this temple. It gives the genealogy of the Chandel kings from Nannuka to Dhanga and informs us that the latter king built this temple to Siva and dedicated in it a *linga*, made of emerald. The inscription is a posthumous panegyric (Sanskrit *prasasti*) on Dhanga written some two years after his death. The temple must, however, have been completed during his lifetime. The emerald *linga* has long since vanished and been replaced by one of common stone.

The other inscription does not belong to the Visvanatha temple. It is said to have been found on the site of a now extinct temple of Vaidyanatha near Khajuraho. It is dated in Vikrama Samvat 1058 or A.D. 1001, and refers to the building of a town, etc., by one Kokkala. The scribe of the inscriptions was a Kayastha named Yashapala, who is mentioned in verse 59 of the document.

## NANDI TEMPLE.

The Nandi temple, which stands in front of the main temple facing towards it, contains a highly polished colossal statue, 7'-3" long and 6' high, of the bull Nandi who is the *Vahana* or vehicle and chamberlain of the god Siva, and also the guardian of all quadrupeds. In plan, the temple is a square of twelve pillars with two-pillared balconies projecting on the north, east and south sides, and a portico also carried on two pillars preceded by a flight of steps on the fourth side. The temple measures 31'-3" in length excluding the steps, and 30'-9" in width. It is of the same age as the Visvanatha temple.

## PARVATI TEMPLE.

The Parvati temple is situated immediately to the south-west of the Visvanatha temple. Only the sanctum remains, but as its lintel bears on its centre a figure of Vishnu, it is evident that the temple must have been dedicated to a Vaishnava deity, probably to Vishnu himself. The image at present worshipped in the shrine is one of Lakshmi and the name 'Parvati temple', by which it is now known to the villagers, is in any case a misnomer.

LAKSHMANA  
TEMPLE.

Another temple originally consecrated to Vishnu is the Lakshmanji-ka-mandir. It is similar in plan and almost exactly of the same size as the temple of Visvanatha, being 98' in length and 45'-3" in width. Of the five subordinate shrines attached to it, four are placed, as usual, at the corners of the terrace, and the fifth, dedicated to Garuda, the bird-vehicle of Vishnu, in front of the temple. The figure of Garuda, however, has disappeared and the shrine is now called the Devi temple.

The Lakshmana temple is prominent among the Khajuraho temples, for the boldness of its outline and the relatively high quality of its reliefs, some of which will be referred to anon. The entrance to the temple is decorated with an elegant *torana*, and the ceiling of the *mandapa* or nave is relieved with ingenious devices of cusped and coffered circles. In keeping with its Vaishnava character, the lintel over the entrance to the sanctum bears a figure of Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, in its centre with figures of Brahma and Siva

to her right and left. Above the lintel is a frieze carved with figures of the Navagraha, the nine planets, and on the jambs are reliefs illustrating the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons, the incarnations of Vishnu, such as Vamana or the dwarf, Varaha or the boar, Matsaya or the fish, Parasurama, Narasimha, etc., and fine scroll work intermingled with figures of birds, ascetics, and the like. Inside the sanctum is a four-armed and three-headed figure of Vishnu, 4'-1" in height, standing in a sumptuously carved *torana* frame. The middle head of the deity is human; the side ones are those of the lion, and boar (Narasimha and Varaha) incarnations.

Fortunately the history of this statue, as well as of the temple in which it is enshrined is recorded in an inscription, said to have been found when the temple was being repaired by Maharaja Pratap Singh of Chhatarpur some time after the year 1843. This inscription is now lying in the *mandapa*. It opens, as might be expected, with an invocation to Bhagavat Vasudeva or Krishna, which is followed, as in the Chandel inscriptions referred to above, by the genealogy of the family down to Dhanga. We are then told that king Yasovarman, otherwise known as Lakshavarman, father of Dhanga, built at Khajuraho a temple of Vishnu in which he installed an image, doubtless this very one, which he had obtained from king Devapala of Kanauj, the successor of Kshitipala or Mahipala, who had been defeated by Yasovarman's father, Harshadeva. The inscription was recorded in the reign of Dhanga in Vikrama Samvat 1011 (A.D. 954). It is not improbable that the present local name of the temple may be derived from the second name, Lakshavarman, of the founder.

On the outside of the temple are the usual reliefs—multitudes of gods and demigods, scenes of devotion and hunting, dances, wrestling matches, elephant fights and processions of warriors. Of the sculptures on the smaller shrines at the corners of the terrace one deserves special mention. It occurs on the east face of the shrine at the south-east corner, and portrays a teacher surrounded by a class of

pupils. There is also a short pilgrim's record of interest on the north face of the north-west pillar of the portico of the same temple. It is dated in Samvat 1161 (A.D.1104), 150 years after the erection of the temple.

The platform on which the temple stands has survived in good condition, though the stone benches along its edges have mostly perished. The various mouldings and sculptured friezes with which it is decorated resemble those on the plinth of temple itself. The subjects delineated are processions of elephants, horses, fighting scenes and lines of soldiers armed with bows, arrows, swords, shields, spears and daggers, preceded by their officers who ride on horseback and wear long boots. Another relief represents the god Revanta, the son of Surya or the Sun, riding a horse with an umbrella held over his head by an attendant. He is engaged in his favourite sport, boar hunting.

#### MATANGESVARA TEMPLE.

This is a plain, square temple situated close to the south of the Lakshmana temple. It is  $24\frac{1}{2}$  feet square inside and 35 feet square outside with oriel windows on three sides and a projecting portico with a flight of steps on the east, in which direction the temple faces. The circular ceiling, which is formed of concentric rings overlapping each other, rests on an octagon, which is supported on four pairs of pillars, placed one in each of the four openings. The four pillars in the corners of the temple formed no part of the original design, having been inserted at a later date to support some cracked lintels of the ceiling. The whole of the inner floor of the sanctum is occupied by a large Yoni, 20'-4" in diameter and 4'-5" in height, in which is set a highly polished colossal stone *linga* 3'-8" in diameter and 8'-4" in height. On the body of the *linga* are two Persian and several Nagari epigraphs written in indelible ink.

The temple of Matangesvara is held in especial veneration by the family of His Highness the Maharaja as well as by the public at large and is regarded as the holiest of all the Khajuraho temples. There is

no record to show the date of its erection but it appears to have been built in the 11th century A.D.

This is a small open temple of fourteen pillars situated in front of VARAHA TEMPLE, the Matangesvara temple and dedicated to Varaha, the third or Boar incarnation of Vishnu. According to Sanskrit texts, an insolent demon named Hiranyaksha, had seized the earth and carried it to the depths of the ocean. Thereon Vishnu took the form of a boar, killed the demon and lifted up the earth. This temple is an oblong chamber 20'-6" in length and 16 ft. in width, with a portico of two pillars on its west side, and is placed on a high plinth. The pillars have no bases but rest on stone benches which run along the interior on all four sides. The roof of the temple is constructed of stepped horizontal courses like that of the Matangesvara temple, while the ceiling is composed of concentric rectangles of plain stones, the contracted opening at the top being closed by a pair of slabs carved with a full blown lotus.

The colossal statue of the boar, which stands on a low pedestal in the middle of the temple, measures 8'-9" in length and 5'-9" in height, and is carved out of a single block of stone (Plate VIII). Like a similar statue at Eran, near Saugor, the boar is covered all over the body, head, and legs with a multiplicity of figures of Hindu gods and goddesses, including Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Surya, Sarasvati, Ganga, Nagadevas, Gandharvas, Dikpalas, and the Navagraha or Nine Planets. The figure of the earth goddess, Prithivi, whom the deity had raised from the ocean with his left tooth, is broken off, but traces of her feet still remain on the pedestal. On the pedestal beneath the boar are the remains of a long and sinuous figure of a serpent deity (Nagi), in a devotional attitude.

This is situated immediately to the south of the Matangesvara JARDINE temple and is called after Mr. W. E. Jardine, formerly Political Agent MUSEUM. in Bundelkhand. It was built in 1910 and contains many hundreds of sculptures and other carved stones from round about Khajuraho and its neighbourhood. Some typical specimens of these sculptures are reproduced on Plates XI, XII and XIII.

## EASTERN GROUP.

The Eastern group of temples is situated in close proximity to the village of Khajuraho. It comprises three Brahmanical or Hindu and three large Jaina temples, *viz.*, the Ghantai temple, the temple of Adinatha and that of Parsvanatha. The Hindu temples are those of Brahma, Vamana and Javari.

### COLOSSAL STATUE OF HANUMAN.

This statue is enshrined in a modern temple situated about half way between the Western group of temples and Khajuraho village. The Monkey God, Hanuman, also known as Maruti or the son of the Wind God, played an important part in the great war waged by Rama against Lanka to recover his wife Sita, who had been treacherously carried off by Ravana, the king of that island. In Northern India the cult of Hanuman is especially popular. The image, now covered with red lead and *ghi*, is of the usual type but is interesting on account of a short dedicatory inscription cut on its pedestal, which is dated in the year 316 of the Harsha era (922 A.D.) and is the oldest of the known inscriptions at Khajuraho.

### BRAHMA TEMPLE.

This temple occupies a fine position on the bank of the Khajuraho Sagar. The name, Brahma temple, by which it is now locally known, is, however, erroneous. The four-faced (*chaturmukha*) image inside the sanctum is definitely a Siva-*linga*, which has been mistaken by the local worshippers for an image of Brahma, who also has four faces. This image with its pedestal is in its original position and is undoubtedly the image first installed in the temple. It is true that the central positions on the lintels of the sanctum and west window are occupied by figures of Vishnu. But the stone of which the doors are made, is different from that employed in the rest of the temple, and there can be little doubt that they were brought here from some other temple.

The temple consisted originally of a sanctum and a portico, the latter of which has now disappeared. On three sides of the sanctum are



projections, the windows of which are fitted with thick stone lattices of varying patterns, of a type rarely found in the temples of Khajuraho. This is one of the few temples also constructed of both granite and sandstone. To judge from this and the other features mentioned above, its construction is to be assigned to the latter half of the 9th or the earlier half of the 10th century A.D.

The temple known as Vamana, or the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu, is VAMANA TEMPLE situated about a furlong to the north-east of the so-called Brahma temple. It stands on an exceptionally high platform and is similar in plan to the temples of Devi Jagadambi and Chitragupta, but more massively built than either. The spire of the sanctum is of the usual form save that there are no miniature spires clustered round it. The temple measures 62'-9" in length and 45'-3" in breadth. Inside the sanctum is an interesting image of Vamana, 4'-8" in height, with figures of the incarnations of Vishnu carved on its framework, among them Budha in the *bhumisparsa-mudra* or 'earth-touching' posture. There are only two bands of reliefs on the external walls of the temple representing Hindu gods and goddesses, coquettish females and dragons. The more important groups in the niches of the upper row round the sanctum portray Brahma with his consort on the south, the marriage of Hara and Gauri on the west, and Vishnu with his consort on the north. The corresponding niches in the lower row contain images of Varaha, Narasimha and Vamana.

To the north and east of the Vamana temple are several mounds KAKRA MARH. marking the sites of ancient temples. One of these is a Vaishnava temple known as Kakra Marh. It is situated about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to the east of the Vamana temple, and on the left side of the *kachcha* road to Chitrai. It is a mere remnant, comprising no more than the entrance to the sanctum and the four pillars of the transept. A chiselled sketch of a snake on the bench inside the east oriel window merits passing notice.

This small but well proportioned temple lies in the midst of the fields JAVARI TEMPLE close to the north-east of the village of Khajuraho and is dedicated to Vishnu, whose four-armed image is enshrined in the sanctum. The



temple comprises an *ardhamandapa*, a *mahamandapa* and a *garbhagriha* or sanctum; and measures 39 ft. in length by 21'-4" in breadth. Its carvings are as rich as on the larger temples, and the three ubiquitous bands outside the sanctum here as elsewhere portray the Dikpalas, Gandharvas, Karttikeya, Lakshmi and other gods and goddesses. The temple appears to date from the 10th century A.D.

**GHANTAI TEMPLE.** The three Jaina temples to which allusion has already been made are situated to the south-east of the village. Of these the Ghantai temple is so named from the bells suspended on chains which adorn the pillars of its portico. The plan of the temple is similar to that of the Parsvanatha temple and originally consisted of a portico (*ardhamandapa*), a transept (*mahamandapa*), an ante-chamber (*antarala*) and a *garbhagriha* or sanctum. All four chambers were encompassed by a common ambulatory, the outer wall of which has vanished. The pillars of the portico are gracefully decorated with bands of conventionalized horned heads (*kirtimukha*) or 'faces of glory' and interlaced semi-circles containing figures of ascetics, *gandharvas* and the like. The coffered ceiling, a part of which has disappeared, is bordered by rows of panels depicting groups of musicians dancing and playing on many kinds of instruments.

When General Cunningham first visited this temple he inferred that it was Buddhist, since he found lying outside it a large seated figure of Buddha with the Buddhist creed inscribed on its pedestal. Later on, however, he abandoned this opinion as the clearance of the interior of the temple yielded as many as eleven seated or standing statues of the Jaina Tirthankaras and two of their Yakshis. The former are all naked, thus showing that the temple belonged to the Digambara or 'sky-clad' sect of the Jainas, as distinguished from the Svetambara or 'white-clad' sect. Above the entrance to the temple is an image of an eight-armed Jaina goddess riding on Garuda and holding various weapons and at each end of the lintel a figure of a Tirthankara. The nine figures in the intervening space on the left are the Nine Planets (*Navagraha*). What the eight animal-headed figures on the opposite

side represent, is not clear. The frieze above the lintel displays the elephant, bull, lion, Lakshmi, garland and other auspicious objects which the mother of Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, saw in a dream at the time of his conception.

The Adinatha and Parsvanatha temples are situated within a modern enclosure south-east of the Ghantai temple. The enclosure also contains several modern temples as well as a number of ancient sculptures representing Jaina Tirthankaras with their respective symbols, built into its walls. Many of these sculptures bear short-dated inscriptions. One of them, which is built into the wall of the courtyard of the Santinatha temple, depicts a divine couple with their twin children seated under a tree. (Plate XIII, fig. a.)

The Adinatha temple is smaller than the Parsvanatha and stands immediately to the north of it. It consists of only three chambers of which the portico or *ardhamandapa*, is a modern accretion. Over the entrance to the sanctum is a four-armed figure of a Jaina goddess with other goddesses to her right and left. The Tirthankara image which was once worshipped inside the sanctum has disappeared and it is difficult to say to which of the twenty-four patriarchs the temple was consecrated. On the outside, the sanctum is decorated with the usual three bands of seated and standing images including the Dikpalas which occupy positions at the corners. The figures in the pillared niches represent the principal Jaina goddesses holding weapons and other objects such as the shield, trident, sword, goad, flag, noose, arrow, bow, jug, etc., and riding on their respective *vahanas* or vehicles, e.g., the horse, deer, crocodile, tortoise, lion, eagle, etc. The roof of the temple is in perfect preservation. The base of the spire over the *antarala* is enriched by a belt of pillared niches surmounted by *chaitya* arch pediments containing *kirtimukhas*, crocodiles' heads and other devices. There are other statues of lions and elephants on the top and stepped sides of the pediments.

This is the largest of the Jaina temples now surviving at Khajuraho. It is an oblong structure, 68'-2" long by 34'-11" wide externally. It faces

ADINATHA  
TEMPLE.

PARSVANATHA  
TEMPLE.

east and unlike other temples at this place has an additional little shrine attached to the back of the sanctum. This shrine was originally preceded by a portico supported on the pillars, which is no longer extant. Internally, the temple consists of three chambers, namely, a *mahamandapa*, an *antarala* and a *garbhagriha*. As in the Ghantai temple, all the three chambers are surrounded by a common ambulatory passage, encompassed on all sides by a solid masonry wall with pilasters on the inside, to support the ceiling. In this temple there are no open balconies, and the only means of lighting the passage is by small pierced windows on the north, east and south sides. The portico has an elegantly designed recessed ceiling, from the centre of which hangs a pendant decorated with chain and floral patterns and terminating in a pair of intertwined flying human figures. Above the entrance to the temple is a ten-armed Jaina goddess holding various arms and weapons and riding on a *garuda*. Two other goddesses, riding respectively on a goose and a peacock, are carved at the ends of the lintel. In the same position above the entrance to the sanctum are seated and standing Jainas, while inside against the rear wall of the cella is a large image frame set up on an ornamental throne. The frame is enriched with images of Parsvanatha, and other Tirthankaras, Indra, elephants holding up water jugs, and the like. From the figure of a bull carved in front of the throne it may be surmised that the cult image was a figure of the first Tirthankara Vrishabhanatha or Adinatha. This image has now disappeared, and its place is occupied by a modern stone image of Parsvanatha, which was installed in 1860.

The three belts of sculptures on the outside of the sanctum portray, besides various goddesses, the regents of the quarters and other demi-gods, women at their toilet, applying antimony to their eyes, adorning their hair, looking into mirrors, putting on ornaments and writing letters. Another interesting scene to the left of the central niche on the north side exhibits a small figure apparently extracting a thorn from a woman's foot. The bag which the little surgeon carries

is presumably meant for his instruments. The bays between the pilasters in the outer wall of the passage were all occupied by large images of Tirthankaras on pedestals, only three of which are now in position. The decorations of the massive wall which surrounds the whole of the temple consist of bold deep mouldings on the plinth and, above them, tiers of statues of Jaina Tirthankaras, Hindu gods including Brahma, Vishnu and Siva with or without their consorts, Balarama and regents of the quarters. The inclusion of purely Brahmanical figures in the ornamentation of a Jaina temple is noteworthy.

There is no record belonging to this temple to tell us the date of its foundation. On the left jamb of the entrance, however, there is a short Nagari inscription of eleven lines which is dated on Monday, the 7th of the bright fortnight of Vaisakha in (Vikrama) Samvat 1711 (A.D. 1654), and records the homage of a certain votary of the Jina, presumably the Tirthankara Vrishabhanatha, to whom this temple was most probably dedicated. The name of the votary was Pahila. Then follows a list of seven gardens or enclosures (*vatika*) which were presumably donated by the said Pahila for the maintenance of the temple, and a prayer that the gift may continue to be honoured by his successors. The inscription also mentions a certain Maharajaguru, named Sri-Vasavachandra. General Cunningham read the date of this epigraph as Samvat 1011 (A.D. 954), and assigned the erection of the temple to about the ninth century. The temple must, however, be some 200 years later. The right hand jamb of the entrance is inscribed with several pilgrims' records of no historical value. There is also a magic square of 16 figures disposed in such a way that each column gives a total of 34 whether it is read horizontally, perpendicularly or diagonally.

Close to the south of the Parsvanatha temple there is a modern SANTINATHA temple known as the temple of Santinatha. It contains a standing <sup>TEMPLE.</sup> colossal image 14' high, of a Jaina Tirthankara which is proclaimed by the bull carved on the pedestal to be Vrishabhanatha (Adinatha).

General Cunningham mentions the existence on the pedestal of a short dedicatory inscription which was dated in Samvat 1085 (A.D. 1028) and designates the statue as 'Setnath'. The epigraph is, however, now hidden under plaster and it is impossible to say if it was correctly deciphered. So much seems certain that the colossus still occupies its original position.

## SOUTHERN GROUP OF TEMPLES.

The Southern group of temples comprises the Duladeo and the Chaturbhuja or Jatkari temples.

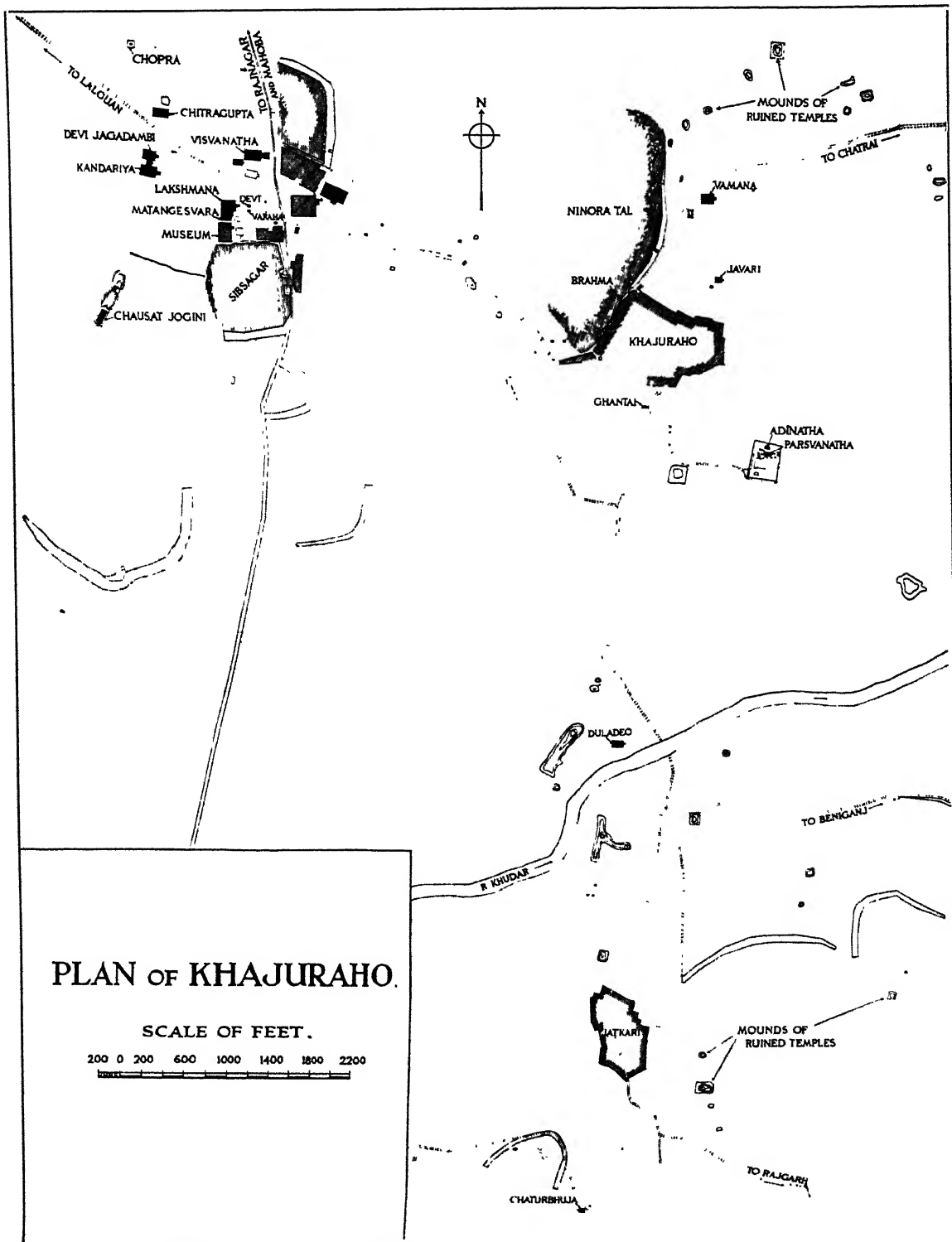
The Duladeo temple is situated due south of the Ghantai temple. <sup>DULADEO</sup>  
Some people call it the Nilakantha temple. The latter, however, stood <sup>TEMPLE.</sup>  
to the north of the Duladeo temple and its position is still marked by a heap of large loose boulders. The temple of Duladeo is one of the finest of the temples at Khajuraho. The origin of the name 'Duladeo' is not known, but people relate a fanciful story about it. A marriage party was passing by the temple. The bridegroom suddenly fell down and died and became a *deva* or god. The temple thus received the name of Duladeo or the holy bridegroom. The Siva image now worshipped in this temple was brought over from another ruined fane, but that the Duladeo temple was originally dedicated to the Siva cult is placed beyond doubt by a figure of Siva carved in the centre of the lintel over the entrance to the sanctum.

The temple measures 69'-2"×40'-3" externally and consists of the usual five chambers. There is, however, no ambulatory passage and the ceiling of the transept or *mahamandapa* is differently arranged from that of any other temple, being formed of successively diminishing circles of overlapping stones. The conservation of this temple was a very complex and difficult task; for the spire over the sanctum was in a precarious condition, the masonry facing on all four sides having wholly disappeared and the outside walls and roof of the *mahamandapa* or transept being much decayed. The *ardhamandapa* also had fallen forward and parted from the mass behind it, with the result that all the four faces of the spire had to be refaced with new stone and extensive measures undertaken for the preservation of the *mahamandapa* and the *ardhamandapa*.

There is no inscription on the temple but the word *Vasala*, probably a mason's name, is repeated several times on the walls and other parts of the temple in Nagari characters of about the 10th century A.D.

JATKARI OR  
CHATURBHUJA  
TEMPLE.

This temple is situated about three furlongs to the south of the Jatkari village, and faces west. It is dedicated to Vishnu and a colossal image of this deity, 9 feet in height, is enshrined in the sanctum. The image is four-armed (*chaturbhujā*) and exquisitely decorated with a crown and other ornaments. The lower hands of the image are broken; the upper right hand is raised in benediction (*abhaya-mudra*), and bears a circular mark on the palm. The left hand holds the stalk of a lotus and a Veda or other sacred book tied with a string. In plan, the temple is similar to that of the Adinatha, consisting of only a *garbhagriha*, a *mahamandapā* with oriel bay windows on its north and south, and an *ardhamandapa* or portico. The outside of the sanctum is decorated with the same three rows of sculptures representing Hindu gods and goddesses as have been noted above in connection with the other large temples of Khajuraho. The principal figure of the middle row on the north is a lion-headed female, perhaps the energy of the man-lion incarnation of Vishnu; on the east is a four-armed statue of Siva seated on his bull and holding his trident (*trisula*) and a snake; and on the south, a half male and half female (*ardhanarisa*) representation of Siva. The spire, which surmounted the sanctum, is missing. The temple was extensively repaired during the years 1921 to 1923.





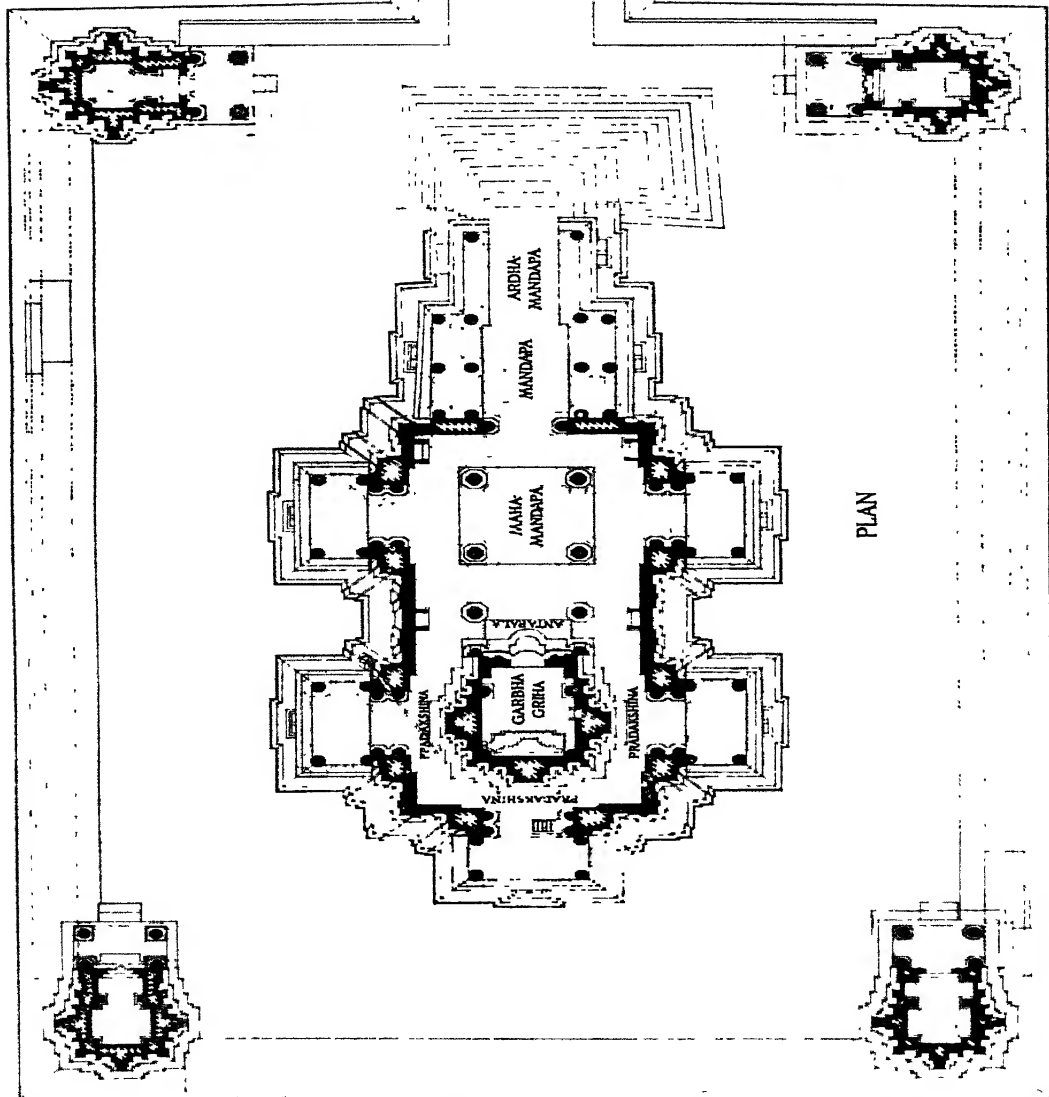


# LAKSHMANA TEMPLE AT KHAJURAHO.

SCALE OF FEET

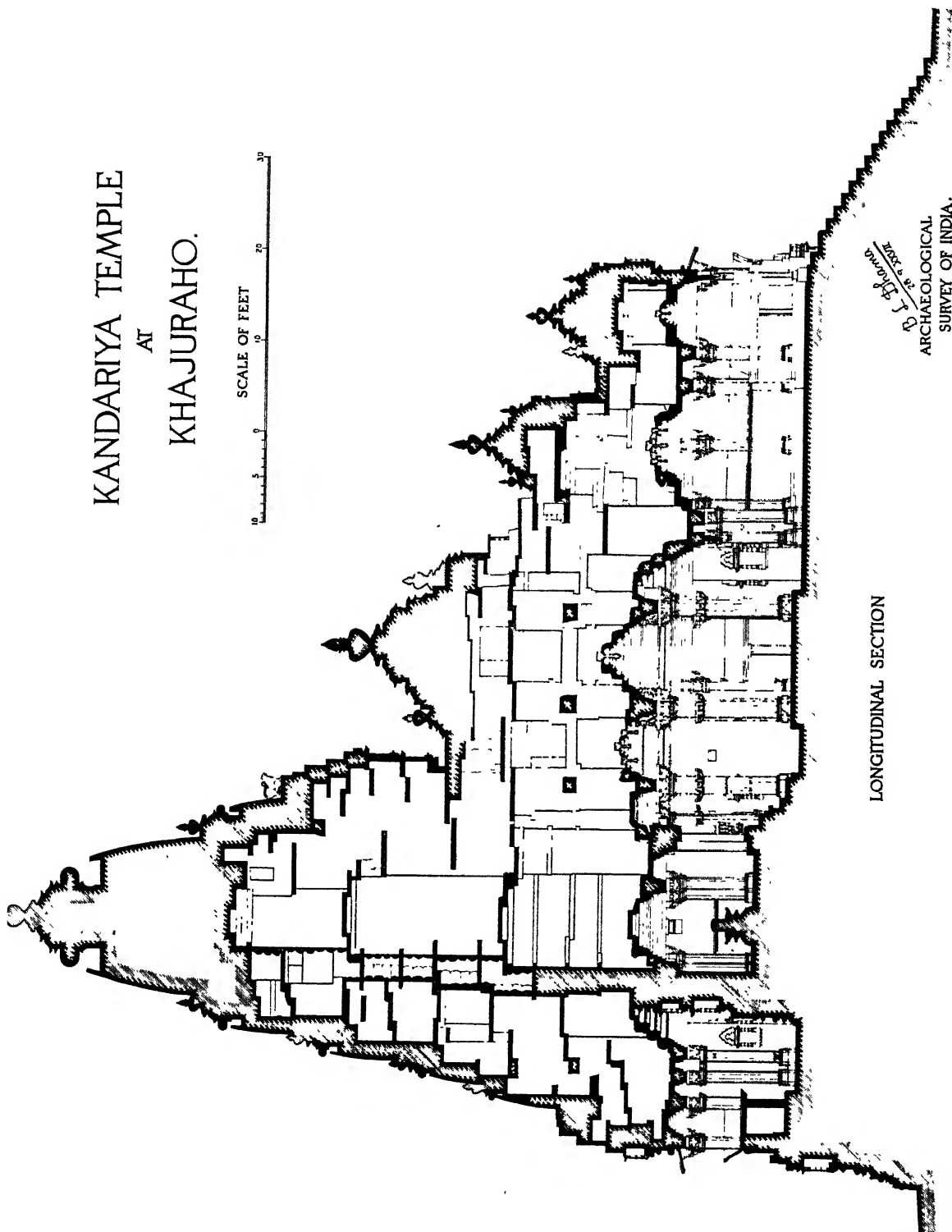
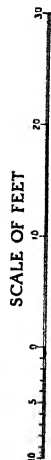


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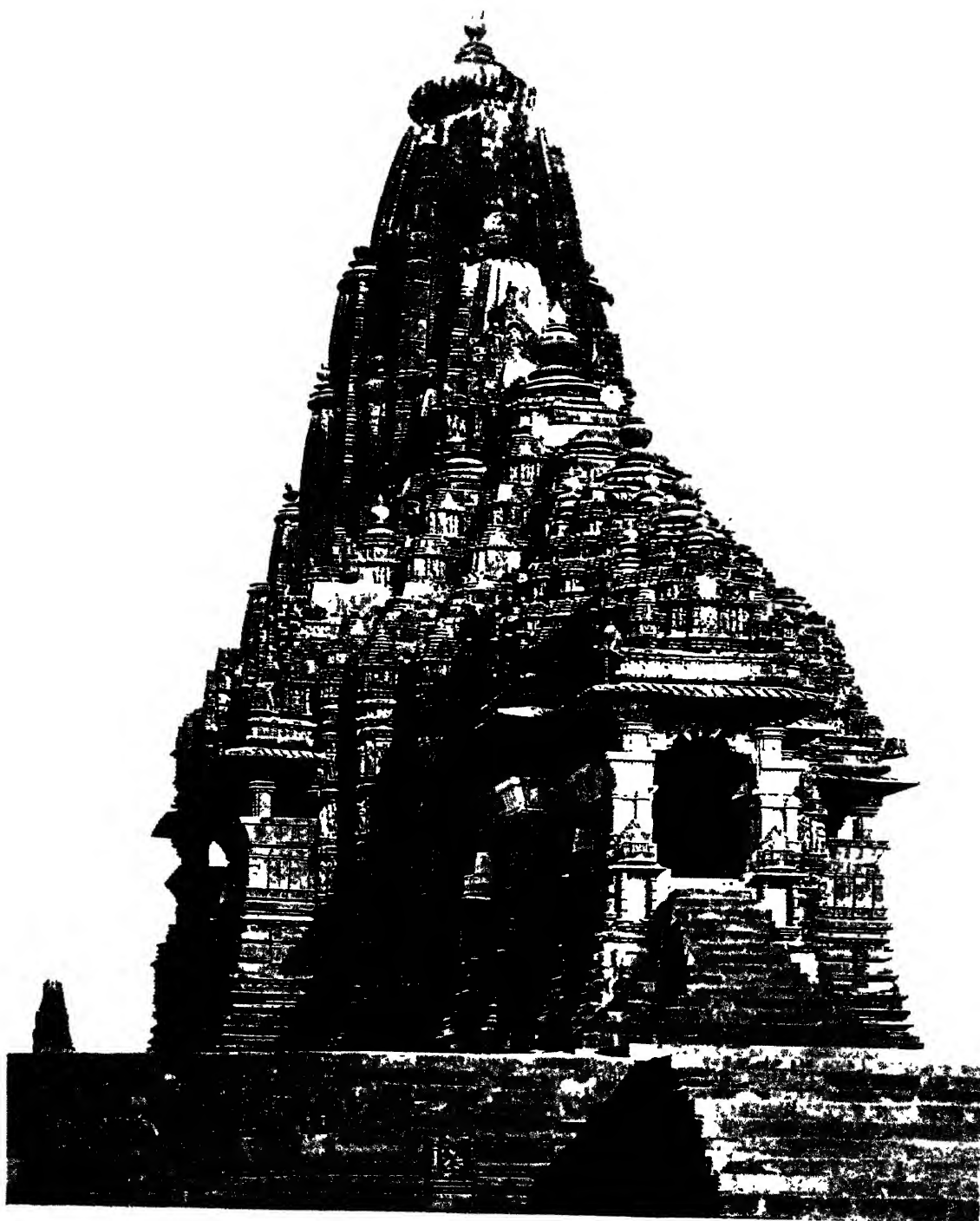
KANDARIYA TEMPLE  
AT  
KHAJURAHO.



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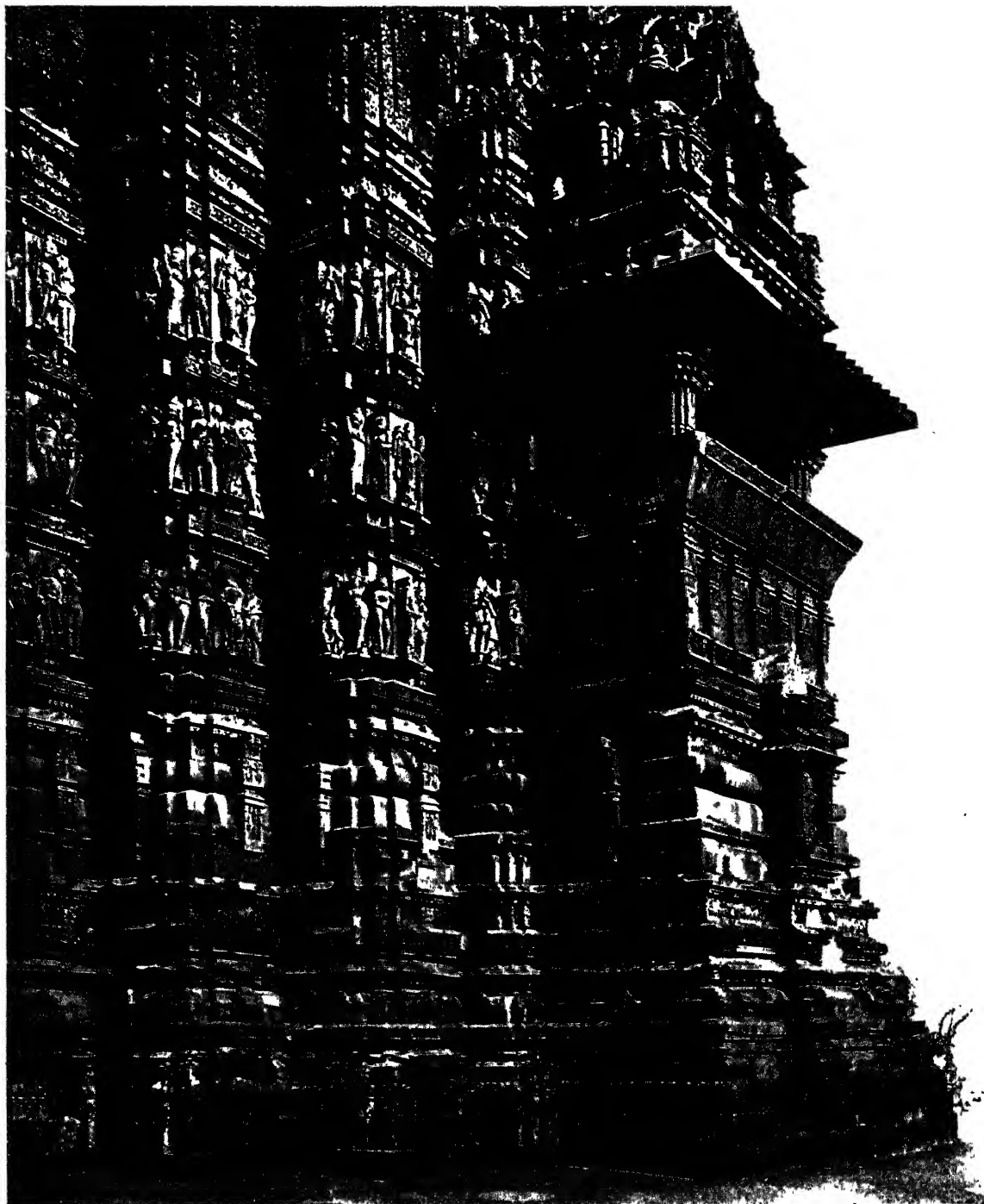
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Kandariya Temple.

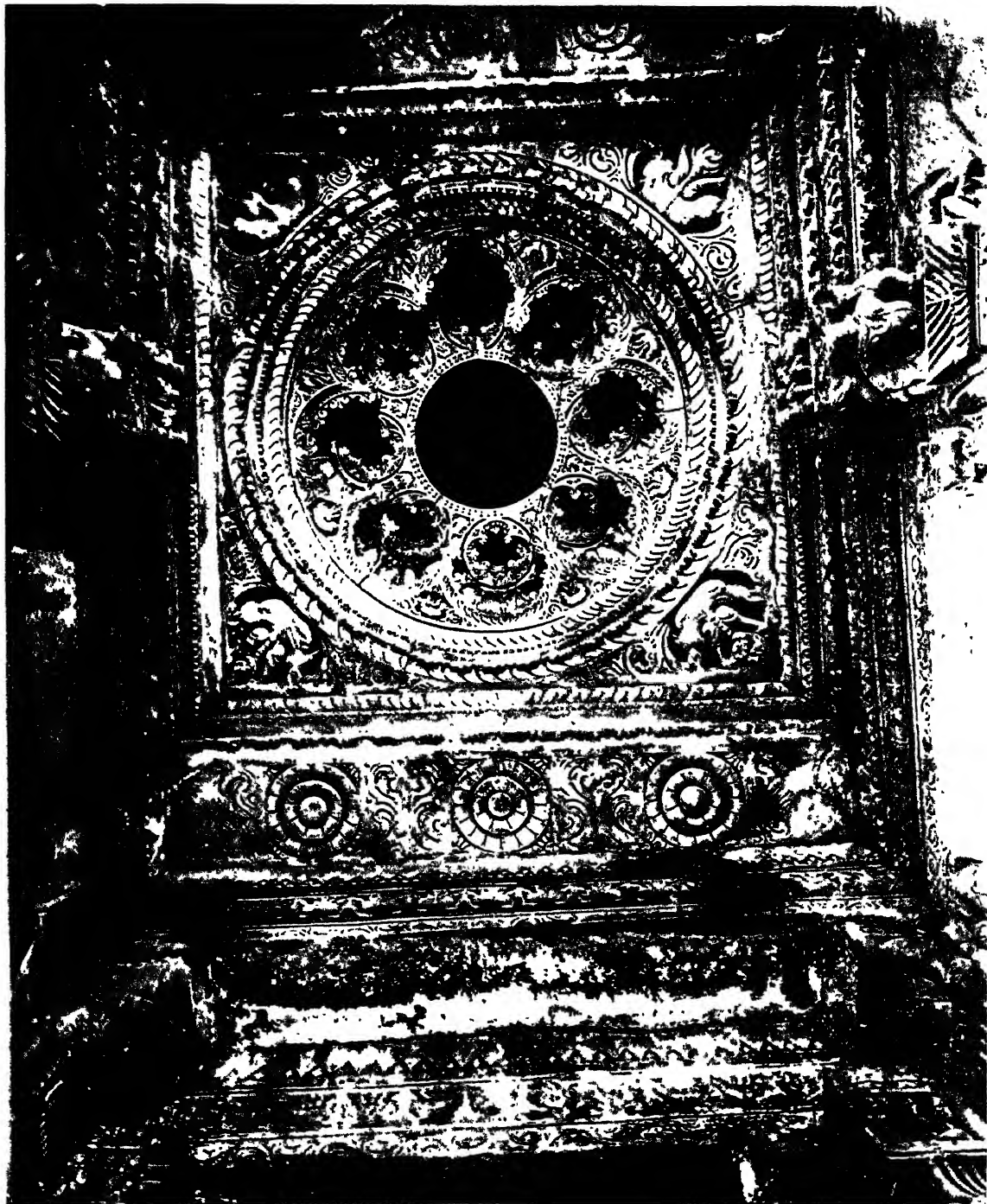




Kandariya Temple : details from the north-east facade of the sanctum.





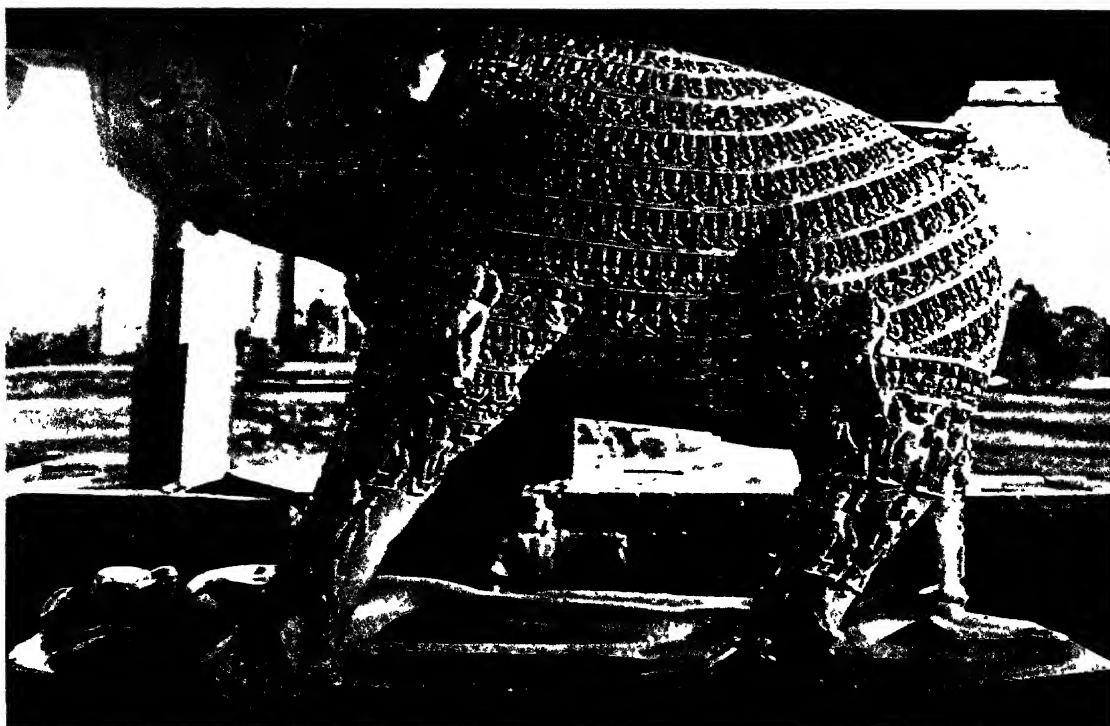


Kandariya Temple ; ceiling of the Mandapa.





(a) Temple of Visvanatha.      (b) Temple of Nandi.



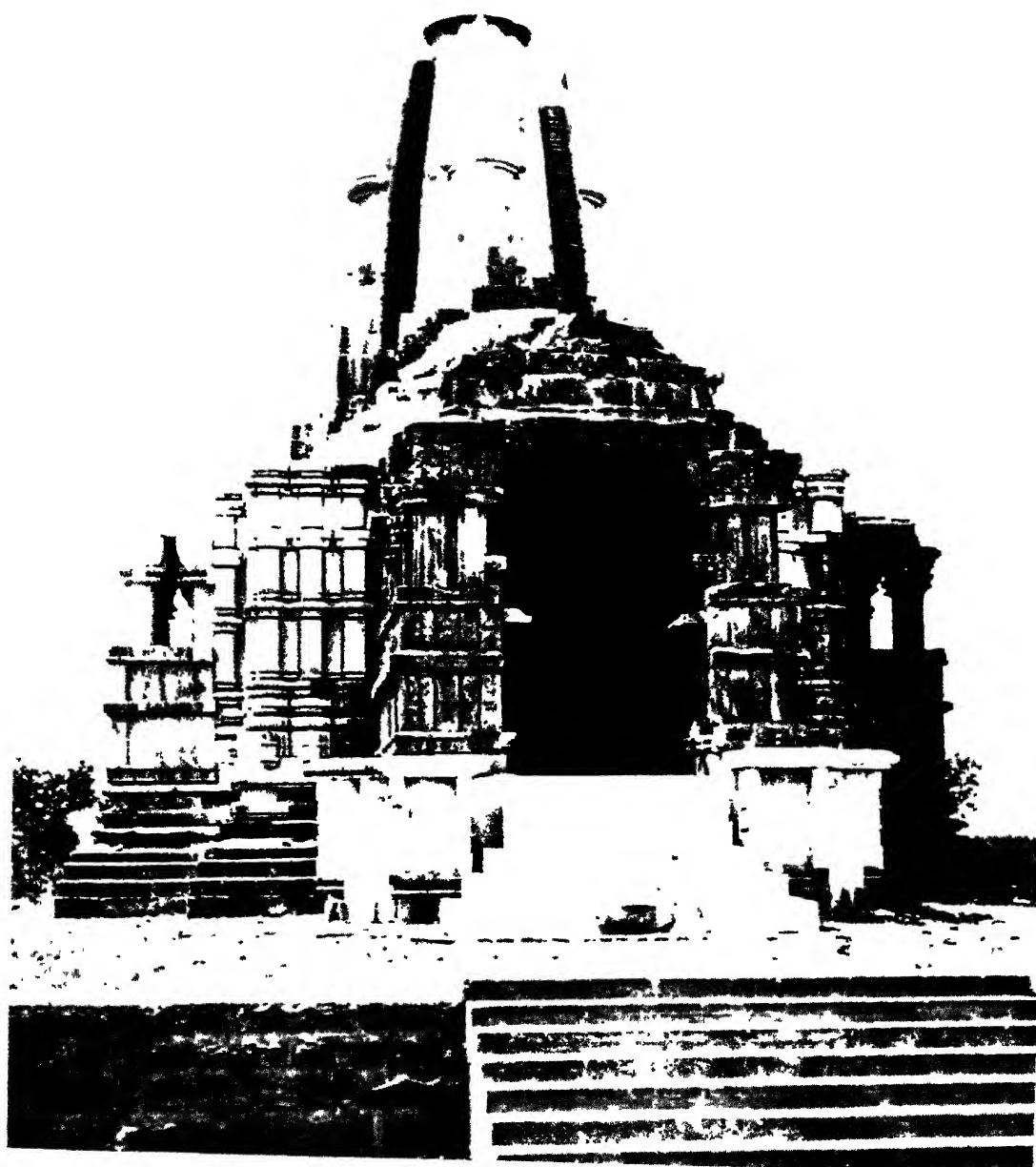
(c) Colossal Image of Varaha.





Ghantai Temple.





Duladeo Temple, after Conservation.







(a) Lintel showing events from the life of Lord Krishna.



(b) Lintel showing the churning of the ocean, some of the *aratatas* and the Cow Surabhi.





(a) Image of Buddha in Bhumisparsa-mudra.



(b) Image of Naga.



(c) Image of Karttikeya.



(d) Image of Vishnu.





(a) Divine couple of the Jainas.



(b) Marriage of Siva and Parvati.



(c) Image of Varaha.



(d) Image of Hari-Hara.









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